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AUTHOR Long, Toni  
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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents a strategy for teaching non-verbal communication skills to students in high school or college. The strategy uses the movie "Date with an Angel" to teach the non-verbal skills. According to the paper, the activity can be used at the beginning of a unit or course to get the students interested in important concepts/aspects of non-verbal communication, or it can be used at the end of the unit/course to review the specific concepts studied. The paper states that the movie provides examples of eye gaze, facial expression, spontaneous communication, kinesics, and physical appearance. It points out the examples of each concept in the movie and recommends leading a class discussion after showing the movie clips.  
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**"DATE WITH AN ANGEL":  
A NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION TEACHING TIP**

Toni Long  
Arts and Science Hall 150F  
University of Nebraska at Omaha  
Omaha, NE 68128

**STUDENT PAPER**

**Abstract:** This paper presents a strategy for teaching non-verbal communication skills to students in high-school or college. The strategy uses the movie "Date With An Angel" to teach the non-verbal skills.

An instructional strategy submitted to the annual convention of  
the Eastern Communication Association  
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**"Date With An Angel":**

**A Non-verbal Communication Teaching Tip**

**Goals:**

To show students how non-verbal communication is used as a major tool for communicating. To give students concrete tips on becoming better non-verbal communicators and listeners. To give students a tool to remember concepts studied about non-verbal communication.

**Assignment/Activity**

This activity can be used at the start of a unit or course on non-verbal communication to get the students interested in important concepts/aspects of non-verbal communication, or it can be used at the end of the unit/course to review the specific nonverbal concepts studied. The movie Date With An Angel gives students a tool to help them remember better what they have learned.

Some specific concepts of non-verbal communication that Date With An Angel demonstrates are eye gaze, facial expression, spontaneous communication, kinesics (affect displays), and physical appearance. You may find examples of other non-verbal communication concepts as well in the movie.

An excellent example of eye gaze is the clip when Jim and the angel are met at the door of Jim's apartment by his fiance's father. The father is furious to find him with another woman until she turns around to look at him and her gaze puts him in a trance. The trance ends when the gaze is cut off by them going in the apartment and he once again finds himself furious and wondering what happened.

The same clip could be used to demonstrate facial expression. The father's face turns from anger to affection and back to anger with a very distinct transformation. Also in the clip,

Jim demonstrates the facial expression of bewilderment as he watches the change in the father.

A good example of spontaneous communication, or the expression of emotions unintentionally, in the movie is the scene when Jim and the angel are in the tree house. Both of them express their attraction for each other through their body language and facial expressions. Although the angel never says a word, Jim knows exactly what she is feeling and responds to her, “Yeah, me too.” The angel is surprised when a tear rolls down her face, another spontaneous communication, and Jim tells her that is one more reason why she should not stay on earth. This scene would also be a good example of non-verbal kinesics, such as affect displays and emblems.

The angel’s physical appearance affects communication throughout the movie. She is very beautiful and is dressed like an angel. She has a white light that glows around her at almost all times. Her beauty is undeniable and overwhelming to those who see her, contributing to her ability to captivate people with her gaze.

### **Debriefing & Assessment**

Lead a discussion after showing the movie clips on eye gaze, facial expression, spontaneous communication, kinesics, and physical appearance.

The questions you want to use when facilitating this discussion depend on the specific concepts you cover. Ask students to point out and give examples of each of the concepts listed above and any others that you may want to discuss using the movie. Ask students to think critically about the concepts-- how they feel about them, how they relate to them personally, etc. Get them thinking about how they can use this information in their everyday life.

### **Appraisal**

Despite the potential drawbacks, this is a worthwhile activity and the effort put into overcoming the challenges will be effort well spent.

As an undergraduate and a communication major, whenever concepts of non-verbal communication came up, I always thought of this movie and how true the concepts were, as demonstrated in the movie.

### Readings

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